

**James Madison to Thomas Lehre, August 2, 1828.
Transcription: The Writings of James Madison,
ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons,
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TO THOMAS LEHRE.1 MAD. MSS.

1 The draft of this letter is marked "not sent." Lehre wrote from Charleston: "Disunion is now publicly spoken of & advocated by men, who heretofore always reprobated such an Idea. What would Mr. Jefferson say if he was now alive, to see the great strides that are now making to destroy the beautiful Republican System of Government, the best the world ever saw, which be & yourself laboured so long to establish for the welfare and happiness of your Country."— *Mad. MSS.*

August 2d, 1828

Dr Sir, I have recd. your letter of July 21, and offer my acknowledgments for its friendly enquiries concerning my health, a blessing which I enjoy in as great a degree as could be reasonably looked for at the stage of life to which I am now advanced.

It gives me much pain to find you confirming the spirit of disunion said to prevail in your State. From the high reputation enjoyed by S. Carolina, for a political Department, marked not less by a respect for order than, a love of liberty, from the warm attachment she has ever evinced to the Union, and from her full share of interest in its preservation, I must say she is among the last States within which I could have anticipated sentiments & scenes, such as are described. I cannot but hope that they will be as transient as they are intemperate; and that a foresight of the awful consequences which a separation of the

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States portends, will soon reclaim all well meaning but miscalculating Citizens to a tone of feeling within the limits of the occasion; the sooner as it does not appear that any other State, certainly not this; however disapproving the measures, complained of, is observed to sympathize with the effect they are producing in S. Carolina.

All Govts. even the best, as I trust ours will prove itself to be, have their infirmities. Power wherever lodged, is liable more or less to abuse. In Govts. organized on Republican principles it is necessarily lodged in the majority; which sometimes from a deficient regard 'to justice, or an unconscious bias of interest, as well as from erroneous estimates of public good, may furnish just ground of complaint to the minority. But those who would rush at

once into disunion as an Asylum from offensive measures of the Genl. Govt. would do well to examine how far there be such an identity of interests, of opinions, and of feelings, present & permanent, throughout the States individually considered, as, in the event of their separation, wd. in all cases secure minorities agst. wrongful proceedings of majorities. A recurrence to the period anterior to the adoption of the existing Constitution, and to some of the causes which led to it, will suggest salutary reflections on this subject.